



Week One

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for bringing us together today to encourage each other as we learn to follow you. May we experience the true joy that comes only from you. Amen.

Talk It Over

In this new series, “Know Joy”, we will discover how we can truly know and experience joy in all circumstances.

- This week we watched a clip from the movie “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day”. Even if you haven’t seen the movie, we probably can all resonate with the title. Share about a day you had planned out, but nothing went according to your plan. Your story can be funny or serious.

Read Philippians 4:4

On a good day this verse can be really easy to celebrate and get behind. On a bad day, however, the ideas in this verse can feel fake or even impossible to express.

- Paul, the author of Philippians, writes, “be full of joy in the Lord”. What would you say it looks like to be full of joy?
- Now, let’s answer the question for the full verse: What would you say it looks like to be “full of joy *in the Lord*”?

Read Philippians 1:20:21 and 1:25

This week we looked at the following idea: Happiness is external, joy is internal.

Most of us know there is a difference between happiness and joy — even modern psychology understands this. Both are wonderful feelings, but happiness tends to be externally triggered and is based on other people, things, places, thoughts, and events. Whereas joy is internally driven and not dependent on external realities.

- Based on this understanding of happiness and joy, would you say that your answers to the previous questions are based in joy or in happiness?
- Tell us about a time “happy” things were happening around you, but you were not feeling “happy”.

Read Galatians 5:22-23

In John 16 Jesus says that he will send us a helper. This helper, also called the Holy Spirit, want to help us know joy. Joy, and the other expressions of the fruit of the spirit, grow in our lives as we stay connected to God’s Spirit.

- All relationships look a little different because different people make up those relationships. What is one way you have experienced joy in your relationship with God in the past?
- What are some practical ways we can all stay connected to God’s Spirit throughout this week?

Read Philippians 4:6-9

Choosing to focus on the various things this verse highlighted is not always easy. Troubles are real, pain is real, loss is real; this invitation to experience joy from God is not about ignoring difficulty or faking it until you make it. This is about staying connected to God in the middle of our pain and hurt. This is about finding our strength, peace, and joy in Him.

In this verse, Paul tells us to pray for what we need and to thank God for all he has done. Let's walk through those instructions now as a group:

- What are the various things you can be praying for this week? What needs do you have this week?
- What are the various things you can thank God for? What has God done for you in

Closing Prayer

God, help us to keep our thoughts fixed on you this week. Help us to do our part to cultivate true joy. May we keep practicing all we have learned and received from you and continue to choose joy in our circumstances.

Bonus Challenge:

It takes approximately 15 minutes to read the entire book of Philippians. Your challenge this week is to read through the book of Philippians from start to finish and take note of how often it mentions joy.

Anxiety Workshop

Sometimes we can do all the right things and still struggle more than we like to admit. For more help, consider learning more about the Anxiety Workshop on the EastLake App or website.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group connect in friendship and grow faith.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith for your specific group.

Spend some time praying about your group, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance regarding your specific group.